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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7096

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL, PROP, UR, AF, IN

SUBJ: ALLEGED GHANDI QUOTE ON SOVIET PARTIAL

- WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 01469

1. FOLLOWING YOUR REQUEST (REFTEL), WE CHECKED
CAREFULLY WHAT WAS PUBLISHED ON THE ITALIAN PRESS
ON THE SUBJECT.

2. IN AN UNSIGNED ARTICLE FROM NEW DELHI NOVEMBER 6,
CENTRIST "LA STAMPA" ONLY REPORTED ITALIAN PREMIER
CRAXI'S PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIS MEETING WITH RAJIV
GHANDI. GHANDI WAS NOT QUOTED, NOR WAS CRAXI.
ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE, CRAXI STATED THAT DURING
THE TALKS THE AFGHANISTAN QUESTION WAS BROUGHT UP
AND THAT "THE INDIAN PREMIER EXPRESSED THE OPINION
THAT THE SOVIETS FIND THEMSELVES IN A TRAP FROM
WHICH THEY WOULD LIKE TO GET AWAY."

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3. THE ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONED THE OTHER TOPICS OF
CONVERSATION AS BEING: BILATERAL RELATIONS (BOTH
PREMIERS AGREE THAT THESE SHOULD BE INCREASED);
POST-REYKJAVIK (BOTH AGREE THAT PREMISES EXIST
FOR A U.S./SOVIET AGREEMENT); PAKISTAN (GHANDI
VOICED WORRY OVER NEWS FROM WASHINGTON THAT PAKISTAN
CAN BUILD ITS OWN ATOMIC BOMB).

4. NO GHANDI INTERVIEWS WERE PUBLISHED HERE RECENTLY.

5. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, ITALIAN CENTRIST, TOP-
CIRCULATION "CORRIERE DELLA SERA" NOVEMBER 4 CARRIED
A STORY BY MOSCOW CORRESPONDENT SANDRO SCABELLO ON
PEKING'S "PEOPLE'S DAILY'S" COMMENTS ON SOVIET
TROPIC WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN. SCABELLO QUOTED
THE CHINESE NEWSPAPER AS DEFINING THE WITHDRAWAL

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"AN ORNAMENTAL MANEUVER" AIMED AT "DECEIVING WORLD
PUBLIC OPINION."

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